

to the concerns voiced by more than half of the Nation's Governors, lawmakers on both sides of the aisle on both sides of Capitol Hill, and the American people from across the entire country.

After the September 11 attacks, we paused our refugee admission program to reassess its security vetting procedures, so there is precedent for suspending the refugee program, and this bill does not suspend the refugee program—only in regard to the single instance that I know; that is, we have been threatened that people were going to be snuck into the country under the umbrella of refugee, and of course that is from Iraq and Syria.

We need to move cautiously in accepting refugees from Iraq and Syria given the attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, CA, and even elsewhere around the world. We need to fully understand the risks and the schemes that these terrorists are using before we open our doors to 10,000 more Syrians. Other countries face the same challenge.

Just last week, the French Interior Minister warned his colleagues about the intent of the Islamic State to use authentic-looking Syrian and Iraqi passports to smuggle its operatives into Europe. There is no doubt that the group has obtained thousands of blank passports and intends to facilitate travel by counterfeiting those documents, but more importantly, we must consider a pause in accepting these refugees until we can be sure our background checks and investigations are the best they can be. However, today there is little doubt, even from our leading intelligence officials that we may not be able to stop a Paris-like attack because we cannot tell who among the thousands of Syrian refugees that the administration wishes to resettle here are terrorists.

The Director of the FBI, James Comey, said: "My concern is that there are certain gaps . . . in the data available to us" in screening Syrian refugees. This data, such as fingerprints, background or biographic information, is crucial for adequate screening of potential refugees entering the United States. Director Comey also said: "There is risk associated with bringing anybody in from the outside, but especially from a conflict zone like that."

The United States has been successful in fighting off many large-scale terrorist attacks on our soil, but of course it only takes one mistake. Just last month, the FBI arrested two individuals who reside in the United States and entered the country as refugees, one of whom was arrested for attempting to knowingly and willfully provide material support and resources to the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant.

A Federal agent testified last week that one of the men charged planned to set off bombs at two Houston malls. I asked for the immigration and criminal histories of these individuals to investigate further and satisfy myself,

and I am still waiting for their response. The concerns are real. The threats are real. We cannot jeopardize our national security simply by rolling out our welcome mat to these terrorists.

President Obama's lack of strategy in Syria has exacerbated this human catastrophe. Similarly, this administration has no inclination or strategy to create conditions where refugees can one day return home safely to their own homes. By housing these refugees, the United States is only aiding in a short-term treatment of this whole massive refugee problem and the problems of warfare in the Middle East while at the same time risking the safety of the American people. We must instead focus on defeating ISIS and alleviating the current humanitarian misery, all while creating a future for Syrian refugees in their homeland.

The No. 1 responsibility of the U.S. Federal Government is to protect the homeland and to secure the country against all threats. Moving this bill on our vote tomorrow is one step we can take to advance this principle and to show our concern that the No. 1 responsibility of the Federal Government is the defense of the American people.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### ADOPTEE CITIZENSHIP ACT

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the Adoptee Citizenship Act, legislation that will secure citizenship for adopted children. I wish to thank Senator COATS for co-sponsoring the bill with me, along with Senator MERKLEY, and Senator GILLIBRAND is also a cosponsor.

The Child Citizenship Act of 2000 guaranteed citizenship to most international adoptees. This was very important because sometimes children have been adopted, they come over to live in this country for years, and, in fact, for some reason—the paperwork wasn't filed—they do not actually have their citizenship. The problem with that law back in 2000 was that it did not apply to adoptees who were over 18 at the time the bill was passed. I am sure there were some reasons for that, but it really makes no sense because a kid who was 17 at the time and had been legally adopted was no different from a child who was 19 at the time who had been legally adopted.

What our bill does is very limited. It fixes that. The loophole denies some adult adoptees the right to citizenship even though they were legally adopted

by U.S. citizens and raised in the United States. They are over 18, so they have for the most part lived in the United States for a very long period of time. In fact, they were over 18 back in the year 2000.

The bipartisan Adoptee Citizenship Act would fix this problem by giving citizenship to international adoptees—people who were legally adopted, who were 18 in the year 2000 or older—regardless of how old they were when the Child Citizenship Act passed. These adoptees grew up in American families, they went to American schools, they lead American lives, yet adopted children who are not covered by the Child Citizenship Act are not guaranteed citizenship. Because of their lack of citizenship, adoptees have been refused admission to college and turned down for jobs. This constant threat to the life they know is unjust, and this bill would simply ensure that international adoptees are recognized as the Americans they truly are.

The bill is especially important in my home State of Minnesota. Many people don't know this, but Minnesota actually has one of the highest rates of international adoption in the country. Minnesota families have opened their homes and their hearts to children from all over the world—from Vietnam, to Guatemala, to Nepal, to Haiti.

As cochair of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption, I have worked with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support adoptive families and children. Our children—all kids—deserve so much more than a roof over their heads and a bed to sleep in. Each and every child deserves a loving home, a nurturing family, and a brighter future. That is what this bill is all about. It fixes something. It closes a loophole. It has bipartisan support. I ask my colleagues to consider voting for it. There is obviously a lot of interest from adoptees all across the country who have been living with this, through no fault of their own, for years and years and years.

#### HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

MAJOR ADRIANNA VORDERBRUGGEN

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today to honor U.S. Air Force Maj. Adrianna Vorderbruggen, who was tragically killed in the line of duty 4 days before Christmas when a Taliban suicide bomber rammed his motorcycle carrying explosives into a joint NATO-Afghan patrol near Bagram Air Force Base in Afghanistan. She was the highest ranking military officer there who was killed. There were several others who tragically lost their lives as well.

Today I had the honor of attending the major's funeral service at the Fort Myer Memorial Chapel. Senator FRANKEN was also there. She was laid to rest with full military honors at the Arlington National Cemetery. She is survived by her wife Heather, her son Jacob, her father Joseph, and her brothers, Dan, John, and Chris. I will

note that three of the four members of the family—since I was just talking about adoption—were, in fact, adopted.

Adrianna was a native of my hometown of Plymouth, MN, where she attended my alma mater, Wayzata High School. She excelled in both academics and athletics and was a 3-year starter on the Wayzata High School women's soccer team. This is a very large suburban high school. The year she was a starter and captain, she led the team to the State championship. She was also the captain of the Wayzata High School hockey team.

She went on to the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado and graduated in 2002. In her senior year, she led the women's rugby team to the national championship title. She was their co-captain, so you can imagine. She was a starter on the soccer team and helped lead that team in high school to a State championship. She was the captain of the hockey team, which is a big deal in Minnesota, of a big high school, and she was also the cocaptain of the rugby team and helped lead that team to a national championship title in the Air Force. We can imagine the leadership Adrianna had shown through her life. She always loved sports—something that was talked about a lot today by her family.

After graduating, she attended the Air Force Special Investigations Academy and was deployed to Iraq until 2005. In 2009 she was selected as an Air Force Institute of Technology student in forensic sciences and earned a master's degree in forensic sciences at George Washington University. In 2010 she became a special agent for the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, which investigates felony-level crimes committed by or against Air Force personnel in the United States and overseas.

Major Vorderbruggen was also an outspoken opponent to the military's former don't ask, don't tell policy. She and Heather, an Air Force veteran, were among the first servicemembers to marry after the policy was rescinded in 2010. Adrianna chose to serve her country in spite of the military's policy and fought for reform rather than hiding her identity. As her older brother Chris said, "She inspired us all, I think, by just being herself, and being proud to be who she was."

Adrianna was known by her family and friends for her positive attitude and her infectious smile. At the service this morning, her dad remembered Adrianna's ability to remain upbeat even under challenging circumstances. And she loved their little boy, Jacob, who was there today with a loving family around him.

Major Vorderbruggen will be remembered for the work she did in service to her country and the work she did to make sure all brave men and women in uniform receive the honor and the dignity they so rightfully deserve.

I am proud to call Maj. Adrianna Vorderbruggen a daughter of Min-

nesota. She gave her life for a country she loves.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Wilhelmina Marie Wright, of Minnesota, to be United States District Judge for the District of Minnesota.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 30 minutes of debate.

The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I am proud to rise in support of Justice Wilhelmina Wright's confirmation as a district court judge for the District of Minnesota. Justice Wright, as the members of the Judiciary Committee learned during her fine hearing, is a dedicated public servant with a distinguished career spanning the State and Federal legal system. She is the first person in the history of Minnesota to serve at all three levels of the judiciary and receive this nomination. She served as a district court judge in Minnesota, she served for the Minnesota Court of Appeals, and she now serves on the Minnesota Supreme Court. Her 15 years of judicial experience make her ready to do this job on day one, and I can state that when you hear the statistics about the overload for the District of Minnesota, we need her to start tomorrow on day one.

Her qualifications are impeccable. Justice Wright has sat on panels deciding over 2,000 cases and presided over nearly 700. Yet with all those cases and all these opinions, there were no serious questions raised at all about her being biased or unfair in some way in her work as a judge. In fact, it was the opposite. She has the support of former Senator Norm Coleman, a Republican, and many others in our State who have served across the aisle. Her qualifications reveal a thoughtful and a talented jurist, one who applies the law to the facts of each case.

Justice Wright currently serves as associate justice of the Minnesota Su-

preme Court, a position she has had since her appointment in 2012. As the first African-American woman to serve on the court, Justice Wright has earned the respect of litigants, lawyers, and judicial colleagues alike.

Justice Wright was born in Norfolk, VA. She graduated from Yale College cum laude in 1986 and received her law degree from Harvard Law School in 1989. After law school, Justice Wright clerked for Judge Damon Keith of the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. She then went into private practice for 5 years at Hogan & Hartson. Before long she felt the pull of public service. She joined the Office of the U.S. Attorney for the District of Minnesota and has been a dependable and dedicated leader of the Minnesota legal system ever since that time. During her time as a Federal prosecutor, she received the U.S. Department of Justice Director's Award and the Department's Special Achievement Award.

If you look at her path before she became a judge, every step of the way she excelled. She excelled growing up. She excelled in college and law school in terms of her record. She excelled as a judicial clerk, she excelled in private practice, and she excelled in the U.S. attorney's office, where she received numerous awards. She was then appointed by, I believe, Gov. Jesse Ventura. She did not start her career as a political appointee. He was in the Independent Party. She served as a Ramsey County district court judge from 2000 to 2002, when she was appointed to the Minnesota Court of Appeals.

She served for 10 years until her most recent appointment to the Minnesota Supreme Court. Justice Wright is also involved in a variety of civic and bar activities. She devotes 50 hours per year to educating the public on the law.

If that is not enough, Justice Wright has also worked to improve the legal system. She has been a member of the Minnesota Judicial Council, the Minnesota Courts Public Trust and Confidence Working Group, and the Minnesota State Bar Association Task Force on the Minnesota Bar Association Model Rules of Professional Conduct. In 2006, the Minnesota Women Lawyers honored her with the Myra Bradwell Award for her service, and in 2012 the Minnesota Association of Black Lawyers presented her with the President's Award.

The law has always been more than a profession for Justice Wright. It has been central to her own development. Growing up, she watched her parents fight the Norfolk, VA, school system to ensure her access to the same educational opportunities as everyone else. The protections enforced by the legal system were crucial to her family's struggle. As Justice Wright has said about the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*: "Aside from the Bible, that court order was the most important written document in my family's life."